

The Heron

Quarterly Newsletter of Clinton County Conservation
Volume 32 Number 3 Summer 2010

61 Months

by Eric Wright, former East District Park Officer

Sixty-one months ago I took the job as Park Officer for Clinton County Conservation assigned to the east district. I came to Clinton County from the Great Lakes area of northwest Iowa. I was looking to further my career in the conservation field and better myself as a person and a professional. Now comes time for me to say goodbye to Clinton County Conservation and chase a life goal. By now many of you know that I have accepted a position as Conservation Officer for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. As I look back over my tenure here I would like to share some of my thoughts and highlights.

2005 was a year I moved from college and my life on the lakes. Life on the river is nothing like what I had grown accustomed to. To say that my eyes were opened would be an understatement. It took the better part of the past five years to get used to the way of life on the river. During the first weeks I had to adjust from being a seasonal employee to overseeing seasonal and full-time employees. I am pretty sure that I didn't sleep for the first couple of months. I remember thinking to myself what in the world am I doing here. Thankfully Brad Taylor joined us in late June and with that came some relief for me. By the end of the summer I was settling into the way things were in this neck of the woods.

After my first camping season I was able to make a few goals for the park and myself. One of the first things that got my attention was the amount of law enforcement problems that were happening in the park. I was getting called out at all times of the night to deal with drunks and plain stupidity. I thought to myself, if I were camping I sure wouldn't want to be in the middle of these issues. It became my priority to make the park a more family-oriented, quieter and safer campground. A big asset to that accomplishment was the addition of Brad as a certified peace officer in 2008. That allowed for a certified officer to be on duty at all times. Although it will always be a work in progress I do believe the park is a much better and safer place now than five years ago.

Inside Rock Creek my goals were to update the small cabins, electric sites, boat docks and build a new ranger residence as well as aid in the addition of the Mississippi River Eco-Tourism Center. There were several times that I wondered if any of those goals would be completed. At the time of my departure we are three docks away from that goal, the cabins are all completed, there are just a hand full of campsites left to upgrade, the house is complete and soon the MRETC will become visual to the visitors.

Outside Rock Creek I wanted to see more public hunting on the east side of the county, a campground at Lake Malone and the

rest of Manikowski Prairie planted to native grasses. The Schneckloth addition to Ben Martinson was completed a few years ago, with work yet to be done to get it to its fullest potential. Early steps to the campground at Malone have been taken and hopefully in the near future it will become a reality. Its location, potential to be open year-round and not be influenced by flooding are its major benefits. Additional seeding at Manikowski was completed a couple years back with more to be done in the near future. I was able to spend some time there this spring and believe this hidden gem is on its way to become an excellent hunting area for upland game, turkey and deer.

I am confident with Brad taking over my position that the park will continue to grow and improve. It has been a roller coaster ride over the years and I am happy to say despite the economy surrounding us I believe Clinton County Conservation is on the upswing. The old saying "you have to do more with less" is true to some extent. I feel the department has done a lot with what it has. In reality we are doing less with less. Could you imagine what could be done if we had more?! If it weren't for the dedicated employees it wouldn't appear that we have done more with less. One thing I have learned from fellow co-workers is the passion of what they do. The parks, wildlife areas and environmental education program would just be a sliver of what they are if the employees didn't have the passion and dedication and drive to succeed.

I have to say thanks to everyone at CCCB for all they have done since my arrival. I have to thank Brad for my addiction to waterfowl hunting, although I would be much richer had he not introduced me to the sport! To my current and past seasonal workers and campground hosts I have to say thanks for all your hard work in the parks. They do all the little things that make the parks what they are. A special thanks to Jamie, Michelle, Josh and Jacob Stearns for helping me keep my sanity during the summer months and your dedication to helping make Rock Creek a better place.

As I leave this chapter of my career and begin a new one, the times, memories and lessons learned will not be forgotten. I encourage everyone to follow their dreams and chase their goals. The next time you visit one of Clinton County Conservation's parks, wildlife areas or take a cruise on the Blue Heron, take time to thank the employees. Many of the parks, wildlife areas and or environmental education programs were their vision or dream that they have made a reality. The countless hours that they put in after hours are priceless and many times go unnoticed.

Remember to get a kid hooked on the outdoors, they will thank

Changes at Rock Creek an East District Update

by Brad Taylor, East District Park Officer

Well there have been a lot of new changes happening in the East District in the past month. The biggest change is in personnel. Eric Wright has left and taken a job as a Conservation Officer with the Department of Natural Resources. We wish him the best of luck. With Eric leaving that put me in charge of the East District which includes Rock Creek. Since I have worked in the park for the past five years I am ready for the new challenge. My family and I have moved to Rock Creek and are excited for the new change.

Some of the changes in the park are the electrical camping pedestals. These are in the process of being updated so that all the sites

will be set up for 50 amp service. Another project that will be noticeable is that the canoe and kayak racks are going to be moved closer to the boat ramp to allow paddlers easier access to the river without interfering with the boat docks. We have just purchased four more kayaks to add to the fleet. We now have 10 kayaks and 15 canoes that can be rented at Rock Creek. Mondays thru Wednesdays we're offering FREE 2/hour usage of a canoe, kayak or paddle-boat with each night of registered camping.

Summer is in full swing, if you haven't made it out camping yet, I encourage you to get the family out and enjoy the outdoors with some fishing and s'mores by the fire.



Otter

Comfortable, stable, lightweight, the Otter is Old Town's solution for family water fun. Its superior design tracks better and paddles easier than others in its class. The high-back seat offers exceptional comfort. The large cockpit allows for easier entry and exit.

All paddle-boats are \$5/hour and \$25/day.

Dirigo XT 140

Known for its creature comforts including unique and comfortable thigh pads, a storage glove box and the easy-to-access Space Hatch and ACS seat with on-deck adjustment to maximize your comfort on the water. A removable child/pet seat ideal for a passenger up to 60 lbs. Adjustable foot braces, retractable carry handles, paddle keeper, cup holder and deck bungee are also included.



New!!!



New!!!

The Kestrel 140

It takes a little bit of maneuvering skill but gives even more efficiency, better tracking, more stability and increased gear storage capacity. It is outfitted with a generous cockpit, comfortable thigh braces and a high-back seat. An added feature is the Kestrel's bow hatch and bulkhead. The recessed round hatch has a rigid cover for a smooth deckline to reduce spray.



Cobra Tandem

Lighter weight than other tandems this model offers users the opportunity to socialize while paddling. With deck space for up to five storage hatches, there is plenty of room to stow cargo. This boat is extremely stable and moves through the water easily.

A Fishing Story

by Walt Wickham, Executive Director

On Father's Day, my three youngest children, Nicholas age 14, Emily who is 6 and Olivia now 5 insisted that Dad take them fishing. I have to admit that I had been neglecting my duties as a father and had not taken the girls fishing this year. Nick and I have only been out once, so I felt somewhat obligated to take them and to tell the truth, I wanted to go fishing as much as they did so it didn't take too much arm twisting to convince me.

Before we could go, Emily and Olivia both thought that they needed to go to Wal-Mart to buy *Hannah Montana* fishing poles. They said they really needed them because they were "girl" fishing poles and we didn't have any "girl" fishing poles! It took some fast talking, but I eventually convinced them that the poles that we had stashed away in the garage would work just fine. And besides, if we went shopping, we wouldn't have time to go fishing!

eager to bite your hook. There is nothing worse for a young boy or girl than to go fishing and not catch anything, so I wanted to be sure we were heading to a spot where the fish would be biting.

After fulfilling my fatherly duties and baiting the girl's hooks, we were fishing. After only a couple of minutes, Emily's bobber went under and she had caught her first fish! A keeper-sized bluegill. It wasn't long until she caught two more. Nick, Olivia and even ol' Dad caught some more bluegills, and before long we had our bucket full and it was time to head home.

At home I watched Nick as he cleaned the largest of the fish for the frying pan. Nick hasn't cleaned many fish on his own, so I gave him a few instructions and watched him go to work. Nick worked a little slower than Dad would have, but he did a fine job cleaning the fish. With a little practice, he'll probably



The next thing we needed was some bait. I grabbed a shovel and all four of us headed out to the garden to dig up a few worms. With the first turn of dirt, I realized that we had a problem. Some of the bolder members of our flock of "free range" chickens were snatching up the earthworms as quickly as I could turn a shovelful of soil to expose them! Nick and the girls had to grab fast to get the wiggling worms before the hungry fowl ate them! The chickens were fast, but the kids were faster and it wasn't long before we had a good mess of bait.

Mom filled a jug with lemonade and we headed to the fishing hole. We drove to a local pond where I knew the bluegills would be biting. I'm not going to say exactly where we went... a fisherman never reveals the location of his honey hole...other than to say it was at a county park! This particular pond has a large abundance of hungry bluegills that are almost always

be better at it than me. Once cleaned, the fish were put in the fridge and on the menu for that night's dinner.

Family time in the outdoors is something that I feel is sorely missing from most people's lives these days. It was an important part of my life growing up, and something that I hope to pass on to my children. Whether it is a fishing trip or a hike in the woods, we can all benefit from time together in the outdoors. I feel very strongly that outdoor recreational opportunities are critical to our well being on the personal level, and as a family. As modern day life becomes more and more fast paced and our lives become more removed from nature, having parks and wild areas at our disposal is even more important than ever. After all, what would life be like if you couldn't wet a fishing line with the kids on Father's Day? The kids and I all had a great time and I'm sure that we will go fishing again soon. I might even buy the girls the *Hannah Montana* fishing poles they are wanting.

In It To The End

by Chip Brown, West District Park Officer

Last year I was not successful in getting a turkey while hunting with my daughter Kallie, so I might have bit off more than I could chew by promising her that we would get one this year. After her last day of hunting last fall and before her first day this year, she informed me that it was alright if we didn't get anything, because she was having fun anyway. Just having fun was not an option for this year, I wanted some action.

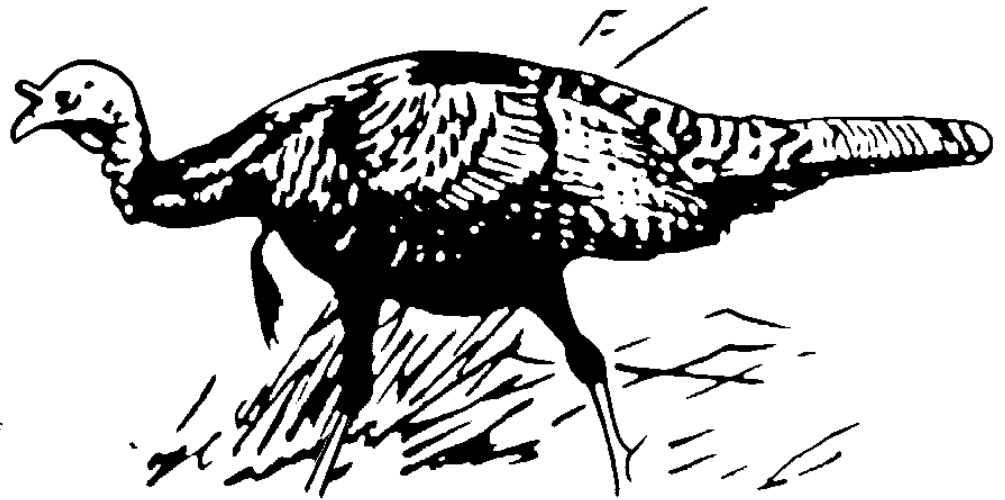
Second season had Kallie waking up before 4:00 am three days in a row, all of which ended in failure on my part. One day we were interrupted by trespassers, another day we had all jakes and hens, and the last day we had some stubborn toms. We did hunt one afternoon that ended with a dad and his daughter dragging butt while returning to the truck after not seeing a single bird. That was the end of our second season, but Kallie still wanted to try fourth season.

Fourth season started slow, really slow, almost non-existent. The first eight days of the season started with rain, soccer, gymnastics, school, and more rain. Day nine started at 4:00 in the morning and ended with no success. On the tenth day I started to rethink my promise, I even asked my wife if she thought Kallie would be upset if I were to go out by myself and get one. She told me to ask her, so I did. Kallie was fine with me going by myself and even wanted me to get one. The next morning I returned to the timber only to have a responding tom shot by someone else on the same parcel of ground I was on.

After more rain, soccer, school, and gymnastics we were able to go again on the last Saturday of the season. However, I wanted to avoid other hunters and the chance of getting shot so we had to drive 35 minutes to Anamosa where I knew we would be alone. To get there in time, we had to leave the house by 3:30 am. Getting her up at that time is fine, it's keeping her awake in the timber that is a challenge. Luckily the birds were gobbling to keep her awake. After not much action or response in one spot I opted to change locations.



At the new location Kallie and I were playing around with the calls and she was practicing when a tom gobbled on the other side of the hill. I grabbed the call from her in fear that her noise would be somehow worse than my calling. After a few clucks and yelps the drumming and strutting tom's bald head appeared over the hill. Without hesitation I



raised my gun and waited for Kallie to tell me to shoot. The full bird appeared within range and almost instantly Kallie was telling me to shoot. After the shot we got up, ran to the bird, and started to take several pictures. I had to laugh when Kallie wanted to carry the tom out of the timber. On the long walk out of the timber I was so relieved that I was able to fulfill my promise to my daughter.



Kallie Brown with the first bird she called in.

Next is squirrel season. We have been target practicing and getting ready for her hunting-with-assistance debut. Good luck to all of the young hunters out there that are just starting this year and for those parents that are willing and able to take a kid hunting.

Basking in the Glow

July

7th ~ Slithering Snakes ~ 2 PM ~ Children's Discovery Center ~ This program is for elementary school age children. This presentation includes live Iowa non-venomous snakes, story, game and a snack. The Children's Discovery Center is located at 332 8th Avenue South in Clinton, near Hy-Vee. This event is free of charge.

8th ~ Sunset Cruise, Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Take a 1.5 hour Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Cruisers will hear information about wildlife, commercial use, navigation and recreational use of the big river. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.

9th ~ Slithering Snakes ~ 10:30 AM ~ Children's Discovery Center ~ This nature program, which builds on awareness of the environment, focuses on our young county residents, three to five year-olds, but all ages can come! This presentation includes live Iowa non-venomous snakes, story, craft and a snack. The Children's Discovery Center is located at 332 8th Avenue South in Clinton, near Hy-Vee. This event is free of charge.

10th ~ Free Paddling Day ~ 9AM - Noon ~ Rock Creek ~ Paddle crafts offer a unique mode of transportation for viewing area wildlife plus they are just plain fun. Rent boats free of charge (regularly \$5/hour), for use in the Rock Creek area.

10th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 - 4 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ Come tour the varied exhibits of this gem of a nature center. Indian, early settlement and natural artifacts fill its rooms and the live animal exhibits are always a hit with the youth.

10th ~ Hayrack Ride ~ 7 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ Good times aboard this 1/2 hour, ranger-guided hayrack ride to the back valley of the refuge. Children must be accompanied by an adult..

14th - 18th ~ Clinton County 4-H Fair ~ 1 - 7 PM Daily ~ Clinton County Fairgrounds, DeWitt ~ Visit the CCCB booth.

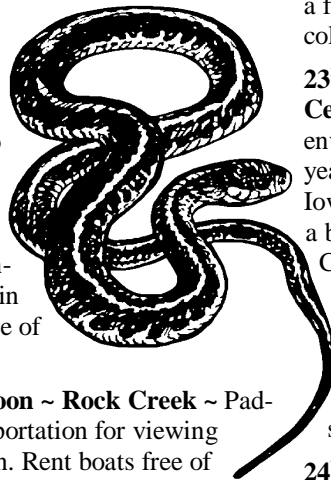
15th ~ Sunset Cruise, Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Take a 1.5 hour Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.

17th ~ Bird Craft ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ Build a homemade bird feeder to take home and make other fun birdie crafts.

17th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 - 4 PM ~ Eden Valley

17th ~ The Benevolent Bat ~ 8 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Come take a peak into the world of bats. We'll play a short informational video, look at specimens, play bat and moth and take a walk into the daily migration trek of thousands of little brown bats. This is a great program for the entire family.

17th ~ Saturday Night at the Movies ~ Dusk ~ Eden Valley ~ Movies are free at the nature center's outdoor screen.



17th ~ Monsignor Menke Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory, for a tour of the summer sky. Please call 563-333-6141 on the day of the event to find out if the weather conditions will permit viewing.

22nd ~ Sunset Cruise, Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Take a 1.5 hour Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.

22nd ~ Moonlight & Music Cruise ~ 9 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Enjoy the music of local instrumentalists as they play and lead in the singing of folk, country, western, pop and rock tunes. Interested performers should call 563-357-0759 to reserve their seats well in advance. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.

23rd ~ Slithering Snakes ~ 10:30 AM ~ DeWitt Community Center ~ This nature program, which builds on awareness of the environment, focuses on our young county residents, three to five year-olds, but all ages can come! This presentation includes live Iowa non-venomous snakes, story, craft and snack. There will be a book, cool snake things and a craft. The DeWitt Community Center is located across from the library at 512 10th Street, Dewitt, IA. Please call 563-847-7202 to register.

23rd ~ Wilderness Music ~ 7 PM ~ Thomson Causeway ~ Thomson, IL ~ Come, sit and enjoy an hour of acoustical music as presented by Chuck Jacobsen including the music of several country, western, folk and popular artists.

24th ~ Bends & Beaches Water Trail Float ~ 9 AM - 2 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ This is a continuance of the spring dedication float. Participants will meet at the Wapsi River Center where they will then be shuttled to Syracuse Wildlife Area. We will pick up the water trail at Syracuse Wildlife Area and float to the Wapsi River Center. At the Wapsi Center, participants will participate in a well-known canoe/kayak experience – the portage! In appreciation of your hard work, the Friends of the Wapsi Center will provide lunch. To reserve a spot/canoe, call 563-328-3286.

24th ~ Paddling Clinic ~ 9 – 12 PM ~ Thomson Causeway ~ Thomson, IL ~ Come see the basics of canoeing and kayaking demonstrated by a 35 year veteran of the sport and then try it for yourself. Equipment will be available on a first come, first served basis so bring a good book to read while you wait your turn.

24th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 – 4 PM ~ Eden Valley

24th ~ Canoe & Kayak Fun Races ~ 1 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Test your paddling skills on a slalom course, against a GPS unit for speed and against each other for tiny prizes. Meet at the east boat ramp on Sodus Slough.



24th ~ Pool 13 Float ~ 1 – 6 PM ~ Thomson Causeway, Thomson, IL ~ Join us for this trip through Thomson Slough and along the eastern shore of Pool 13. We will explore these mainly shallow waters taking breaks by wading for freshwater mussels and exploring open shorelines. Depending on the skill levels, weather, lock availability and our progress we may lock through Lock and Dam 13 or portage the levee east of the Lock & Dam. The portage is a lift over a paved roadway. We will pull out at the Fulton Marina. Participants must wear a PFD when paddling and remain in close proximity to the leader. Boats and paddling gear are available free. Call 563-847-7202 to register today.

24th ~ Sponsor An Animal ~ 3 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ A new sponsorship program is designed to meet the special needs required to maintain the animals at the Wapsi Center. Schools, classrooms, youth organizations, families, and individuals are encouraged to join and sponsor an animal. Come to learn about the program and more great information. Please call 563-328-3286 to sign up!

24th ~ Hayrack Ride ~ 7 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ Good times aboard this 1/2 hour, ranger-guided hayrack ride to the back valley of the refuge. Children must be accompanied by an adult.



28th ~ Middle School Wilderness Outing Orientation Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ DeWitt Community Center ~ Interested middle school students must attend this 3-hour presentation with a parent or guardian in order to qualify for the outing from August 2nd through the 4th. Call 563-847-7202 to register by 4 PM, July 21st.

29th ~ Sunset Cruise, Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Take a 1.5 hour Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.

31st ~ Free Paddling Day ~ 9AM - Noon ~ Rock Creek ~ Paddle crafts offer a unique mode of transportation for viewing area wildlife plus they are just plain fun. Rent boats free of charge (regularly \$5/hour), for use in the Rock Creek area.

31st ~ Family Games and Grill-out ~ 11 AM - 2 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Park staff will grill \$3 butterfly chop sandwiches and have great games set up for your family to play like ladderball, bean bag toss, Frisbee, tether ball, washers, etc.

31st ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 – 4 PM ~ Eden Valley

31st ~ Hayrack Ride ~ 7 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ Good times aboard this 1/2 hour, ranger-guided hayrack ride to the back valley of the refuge. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

31st ~ Public Open House ~ Dusk ~ Jens-Wendt Observatory ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky. Star parties are dependent on the weather. To confirm a party will be held, check www.qcas.org, after 4 PM on the day of the party.

August

2nd ~ Middle School Backpack Trip ~ 12 PM ~ Conservation Headquarters ~ South of Grand Mound ~ Naturalist will lead a select group of Clinton County middle school-aged residents on a 2-night trip into a local wilderness. Packs, compasses, maps, mess, tents, food and cook stoves will be provided. Participants along with a parent or guardian must attend a 3-hour orientation meeting previous to the outing and will provide their own 40° bag, rain gear, mat, water bottles and insect repellent. Call 563-847-7202 to register by 4 PM on July 21st.

4th ~ Batty Bats ~ 2 PM ~ Children's Discovery Center ~ This program is for elementary school-age children. There will be a kid friendly DVD, game and snack. The Children's Discovery Center is located at 332 8th Avenue South in Clinton, near Hy-Vee. This event is free of charge.

5th ~ Batty Bats ~ 10:30 AM ~ DeWitt Community Center ~ This nature program, which builds on awareness of the environment, focuses on our young county residents, three to five year-olds, but all ages can come! There will be a book, cool bat things and a craft. The DeWitt Community Center is located across from the library at 512 10th Street, DeWitt.

5th ~ Sunset Cruise, Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Take a 1.5 hour Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.

6th ~ Batty Bats ~ 10:30 AM ~ Children's Discovery Center

This nature program, which builds on awareness of the environment, focuses on our young county residents, three to five year-olds, but all ages can come! There will be a book, cool bat things, craft and a snack. The Children's Discovery Center and is located at 332 8th Avenue South in Clinton, near Hy-Vee. This event is free of charge.



7th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 – 4 PM ~ Eden Valley

7th ~ Scholastic Recyclables ~ 1:30 PM ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Going "green" when it comes to back-to-school supplies is easier than you think and very cost effective! Learn how to convert cereal boxes, chip bags, food wrappers, soda boxes, juice pouches and t-shirts into functional back-to-school supplies. These trash treasures will be a guaranteed hit! This program will offer lots of fundraising ideas for scout troops, environmental clubs and church youth groups. Registration is required by calling 563-328-3286 by August 5.

7th ~ Sunset Cruise, Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Take a 1.5 hour Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.

7th ~ Saturday Night at the Movies ~ Dusk ~ Eden Valley ~ Movies are free at the nature center's outdoor screen.

7th ~ Night Float ~ 9-10:30 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Join us for a paddle in the dark under the full moon. We'll explore the quiet backwaters of the Mississippi and bayous of the Wapsipinicon. Our senses will be on edge while we hear the night calls of birds and encounter other animal life at this very active time of the day. Call to register / reserve a fully-equipped canoe at 563-847-7202.

9th ~ Mussel Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ The Blue Heron will take participants out to learn about and wade for freshwater mussels. Freshwater mussels are the most endangered group of animals on earth; find out why. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.

12th ~ Sunset Cruise, Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Take a 1.5 hour Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.

13th ~ EnviroKids ~ Going Green Night with the LumberKings ~ 6 PM ~ Alliant Energy Field, Clinton ~ Enjoy a baseball game with the Clinton LumberKings on "Going Green Night" at the ballpark. Check-in is at 6 PM. EnviroKids Recognition Night and post-game fireworks. Direct registration questions to Judie Petersen, 563-244-2531.

13th - 15th ~ 5th Annual Lower Wapsi River Clean-up Project ~ Central Park near Anamosa ~ Though the clean-up is happening in Jones County this year we want to encourage all those who benefit from the great resource we call the Wapsipinicon to join in the effort to clear it of trash and debris. It's a great way to show you care. For more information please contact Melisa Jacobsen at coordinator@lowerwapsicleanup.org.

14th ~ EnviroKids ~ 9 AM ~ Clinton County Area Solid Waste Agency ~ Geared for children from grades 3-5 and younger if accompanied by an adult. Find out what happens to all the trash that you throw away as we tour the landfill. Learn about the life cycle of a landfill and how recycling does not end at the curb. Direct registration questions to Judie Petersen, 563-244-2531.

14th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 - 4 PM ~ Eden Valley

14th ~ Wapsi Canoe Shuttle ~ 10 AM - 3 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ The RC Staff will be transporting people and gear to Ben Martinson Wildlife Area for a 4-mile float back to Rock Creek on the Wapsi and Mississippi Rivers. Free to people who rent our canoes for the day.

14th ~ Monsignor Menke Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory, for a tour of the night sky. Please call 563-333-6141 on the day of the event to find out if the weather conditions will permit viewing.

14th ~ Tube the Bear ~ 1 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ We've rounded up used truck inner-tubes for a cool float down Bear Creek within the boundaries of the Refuge. Tubes will be provided on first-come, first-served basis. Participants will sign in (parent or guardian for youth) and begin near the southwest picnic shelter. They will be provided a tube and PFD, scramble down the bank and float, splash and tread their way downstream to the take-out at the east end of the main campground. Water shoes or an old pair

of sneakers and a PFD must be worn at all times (rocks can be sharp and hard), sunscreen is a good idea as well.

19th ~ Sunset Cruise, Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Take a 1.5 hour Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.

20th ~ Wilderness Music ~ 7 pm ~ Cedar Valley Park ~ West of Tipton, Ia ~ Naturalist Chuck Jacobsen is traveling to Cedar County to present his renditions of the music of many folk, country, western and pop artists. Cedar Valley Park is situated on the banks of the Cedar River with river access and plenty of camp sites. We hope you can join him and get to know our neighbors to the west.

21st ~ Free Paddling Day ~ 9AM - Noon ~ Rock Creek ~ Paddle crafts offer a unique mode of transportation for viewing area wildlife plus they are just plain fun. Rent boats free of charge (regularly \$5/hour), for use in the Rock Creek area.

21st ~ 10 AM - 1 PM ~ Mushroom Foray ~ Eden Valley ~ Join members of the Prairie States Mushroom Club as they lead participants through the forest in search of summer mushrooms. Those collected will be exhibited that afternoon in the nature center.

21st ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 - 4 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ Check out the mushrooms collected during the morning's foray.

21st ~ Isles of the Mississippi Float #1 ~ 1 PM ~ 19th Ave S. Boat Ramp, Clinton ~ The first of two floats exploring the islands of Pool 14 on the Mighty Mississippi. Meet at the 19th Ave S. boat ramp in Clinton for this tour through the largest island on the Mississippi Beaver Island and past many more. We'll cross Beaver Slough and visit Sunfish, Wadleigh and Grass Sloughs as well as the Upper and Lower Lakes of the island and finally Blue Bill Slough. Then we'll across the Main Channel of the Mississippi to the Marais D'Osier Slough and its islands and again back over to Swan Island and Slough to the take out. The currents here are generally slight so plan to paddle most of the distance. Boats and gear are available free of charge. Call 563-847-7202 to register today.

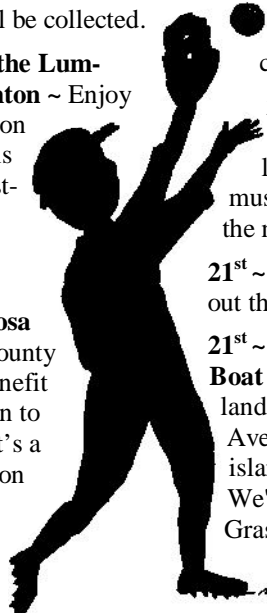
21st ~ Iowa's Native Turtles ~ 7:00 PM ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join AmeriCorps naturalist Katie van der Linden to learn about Iowa's many different native turtle species. We will take a short trip to our aquatic pond to do some turtle trapping. There will be live specimens available for viewing.

21st ~ Music & Marshmallows ~ 8 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Come enjoy the music of John Denver, John Prine, Peter Meyer and others as performed by Chuck Jacobsen while you roast sweets over the fire.

21st ~ Fascinating Fireflies ~ 8:30 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Join AmeriCorps naturalist Katie van der Linden to learn about fireflies. We will take a hike to our prairie to get up close and personal with these unique creatures.

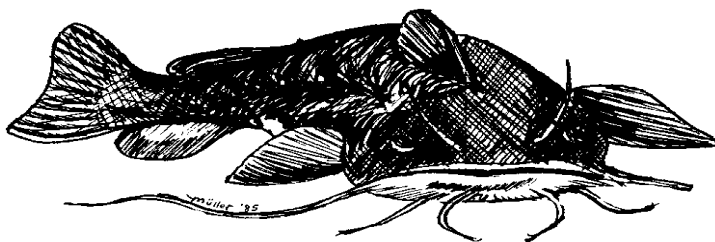
26th ~ Sunset Cruise, Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek

~ Take a 1.5 hour Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.



26th ~ Moonlight & Music Cruise ~ 9 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.

28th ~ 2nd Annual Rock Creek Catfish Classic ~ 7 AM - 2 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ The Clinton County Conservation Foundation is putting on this tournament to raise funds to help build the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center at Rock Creek. Costs are \$50/boat and \$10 for the Big Fish Pot. Prize money is to be determined by the number of entries with a minimum 70 percent payout guaranteed to the top 3 boats. There are door prizes for all contestants. Check-in will begin at 6 AM and weigh-in at 2 PM sharp. Up to a limit of 10 Channel Cats, at a 12" minimum length, will be weighed per entry. Sign-up and rules available at www.missecsocenter.org. This is a WhereFish.com Tournament Series Affiliate tournament. Qualifying teams will receive an invitation to fish the WhereFish.com Tournament of Champions Sept 18th in LeClaire, IA.



28th ~ EnviroKids ~ Fun On the Pond ~ 9 AM - Noon ~ Clinton Izaak Walton League ~ Geared for children from grades 3-5 and younger if accompanied by an adult. Fishing, canoeing, hayride and prairie study. Lunch will be furnished. Direct registration questions to Judie Petersen, 563-244-2531.

28th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 – 4 PM ~ Eden Valley

28th ~ Public Open House ~ Dusk ~ Jens-Wendt Observatory ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky. Star parties are dependent on the weather. To confirm a party will be held, check www.qcas.org, after 4 PM on the day of the party.

28th ~ Snakes of Eastern Iowa ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ We will have a collection of 10 species of non-venomous snakes at the Camp Store to aid in explaining their habits and habitats as well as how to tell them apart.

29th ~ Saturday Night at the Movies ~ Dusk ~ Eden Valley ~ Movies are free at the nature center's outdoor screen.

September

2nd ~ Sunset Cruise, Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Take a 1.5 hour Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.

3rd ~ Friday Night at the Movies ~ 8 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Movies and popcorn are free at the old store.

4th ~ EnviroKids ~ 9 AM - 12 PM ~ Bickelhaupt Arboretum ~ Geared for children from grades 3-5 and younger if accompanied by an adult. Discover the world of Lepidoptera and why they matter to us. Touch, tag, and release Monarch butterflies, and enjoy butterfly-themed crafts and treats at the Arboretum. Direct registration questions to Judie Petersen, 563-244-2531.

4th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 – 4 PM ~ Eden Valley

9th ~ Sunset Cruise, Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Take a 1.5 hour Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.

11th ~ Youth Outdoor Skills Day ~ 8 AM-5 PM ~ Clinton Izaak Walton League ~ Looking for a way to open your child's eyes to a life of adventure in the great outdoors? Looking for a chance for your child to gain experience with a variety of outdoor skills? We have just the thing! Clinton County kids 11-18 will learn about safety and skills at various stations staffed by various Conservation Organizations such as *Pheasants Forever*, *Harvester Bass Club*, *Whitetails Unlimited*, *Wild Turkey Federation*, *Clinton County Conservation*. All stations will involve hands-on activities designed to give kids practical experience while keeping safety at the forefront. Parents and younger siblings are encouraged to attend with students. They will be invited to eat lunch free of charge along with participants. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Each participant will be charged a non-refundable \$5 registration fee and receive a commemorative T-shirt. Call 563-847-7202 for sign-up.

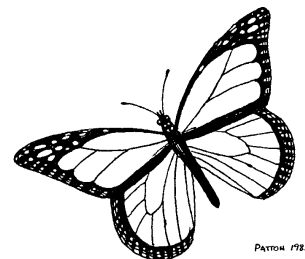


11th ~ Native Ways ~ 10 AM - 3 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Come learn how the Native Americans lived by learning how to track animals, make pottery, weave rope, start fire and build a model wickiup. Please bring a lunch, or items to prepare on an open fire (we'll provide the fire and roasting sticks). Family fun for everyone! Please call to register your family now by calling 563-328-3286.

11th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 – 4 PM ~ Eden Valley

11th ~ Monsignor Menke Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi Center ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory, for a tour of the night sky. Please call 563-333-6141 on the day of the event to find out if the weather conditions will permit viewing.

15th ~ Majestic Monarchs ~ 6:30 PM ~ Malone Lake ~ Every year we tag migrating monarchs for the University of Kansas research (www.monarchwatch.org) and this year we would like your help. Find out how to tell a male from a female then help put little identification stickers on their wings so they can be identified in Mexico.



16th ~ Sunset Cruise, Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Take a 1.5 hour Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.

18th ~ Isles of the Mississippi Float #2 ~ 1 PM ~ Swan Slough Boat Ramp ~ Camanche ~ Meet at Swan Slough Boat Ramp and paddle down river past Swan Island, turning into Hansen Slough and passing Turtle Island, Camanche Island, Coe's Island and Adams Island before pulling into Rock Creek for the shuttle back to Camanche.

18th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 – 4 PM ~ Eden Valley

23rd ~ Sunset Cruise, Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Take a 1.5 hour Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.

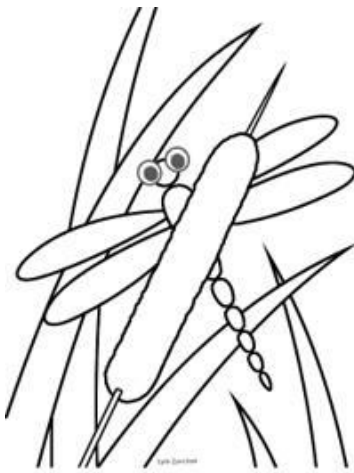
23rd ~ Moonlight & Music Cruise ~ 8 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ En-joy the music of local instrumentalists as they play and lead in the singing of folk, country, western, pop and rock tunes. Interested performers should call 563-357-0759 to reserve their seat. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.

25th ~ Everything Cattail ~ 10 AM ~ Wapsi Center ~ Come learn about the amazing cattail with this hands-on workshop. Learn how they grow and make an awesome cattail craft to take home. Call to reserve a spot 563-328-3286.

25th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 – 4 PM ~ Eden Valley

25th ~ Public Open House ~ Dusk ~ Jens-Wendt Observatory ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky. Star parties are dependent on the weather. To confirm a party will be held, check www.qcas.org, after 4 PM on the day of the party.

30th ~ Sunset Cruise, Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Take a 1.5 hour Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.



October

2nd ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1 – 4 PM ~ Eden Valley

7th ~ Fall Color Cruise ~ 5 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Take a 1.5 hour Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.

9th ~ Nineteenth Annual Ecology Day ~ 10 AM - 6 PM ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Bring the whole family, invite a friend and plan to attend this family-oriented event. More details to come!

9th ~ Clinton County Chapter of Pheasants Forever Banquet ~ 5 PM ~ Millennium Ballroom ~ Pheasants Forever's Clinton County Chapter is holding its annual fund-raiser at the Millennium Ballroom in Goose Lake. The group provides funds to local landowners and agencies for the establishment of wildlife habitat.

Call Mark Roberts at 563-659-2422 for tickets.

9th ~ Bluegrass Jam 12 PM - 9 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ On the 8th of October we will have a big jam around the campfire all afternoon and evening and then the stage show on Saturday the 9th. This will be the 28th year and it keeps getting better each year.

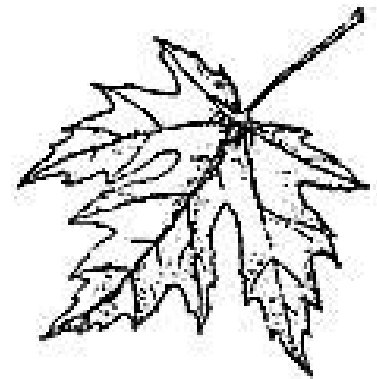
9th ~ Eastern Iowa Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi Center (Monsignor Menke Observatory) ~ Come join representatives from the Quad Cities Astronomical Society and astronomy clubs from all over the Midwest to view the heavens above. Primitive camping is available for \$7 per tent. More information can be found online at www.qcas.org.

14th ~ Fall Color Cruise ~ 5 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Take a 1.5 hour Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is no fee but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.

15th - 17th ~ 2 Nights Out Float ~ 4 PM ~ Walnut Grove Park ~ Toronto ~ Meet at Walnut Grove Park and car pool to our put-in at

Jungletown Access south of Hale, IA. We plan to return by mid-day on Sunday having paddled 17.4 miles on the Wapsi or about 9 hours total; camping on sandbars along the way. Pack your food, water, and gear into airtight containers (30 gal. bags or packs). We will have time for wading, swimming, fishing, etc. Call 563-847-7202 to register and/or reserve equipment; packs, tents, meal kits, cook stoves, boats, paddles or PFD's.

15th - 16th ~ All Girls Night Out ~ Friday 6:30 PM - Saturday 4 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ This is for ages 10 and up attending with a female chaperone. Get out and have fun outdoors without the guys. There will be activities including a Blue Heron Pontoon ride, outdoor survival, paddling, geocaching and much more! There is a \$30 fee to cover lodging in the cabins, food and materials. To register or ask questions call 563-847-7202.



Find Clinton County Conservation of Facebook! Keep up-to-date on events, improvements and news about the "outback" of Clinton County. You can go to Facebook and search for us or type in this long string:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Grand-Mound-IA/Clinton-County-Conservation/252922727324?v=wall>

Once you find us, join the group as a fan and bookmark it!

New Stuff

by Chuck Jacobsen, Interpretive Naturalist

Several years ago I was privileged to join the Dallas County Environmental Education crew on their yearly high school trip into the Bitterroot Wilderness of Idaho. It was my first time out there so my enthusiasm fairly well matched that of the students who were also taking their first trip into that wilderness. There were all the elements of such a trip that one might imagine, backpacks, mountain trails, crystal clear streams, towering trees, glades, fishing, swimming and so on but what occupied most of the group's time was the work of clearing with nothing but hand tools 4.5 miles of trail that was blocked in many places by fallen trees sometimes nearly 5 feet in diameter. And I watched as the students absorbed all of this never losing that enthusiasm. I have crystal clear memories of that trip and I'm sure they do as well.

Ever since, I have been trying to find a way to offer Clinton County students similar experiences. The greatest obstacle has been how to get the students, who are already kept very busy, together to do this. The second greatest obstacle to this has been the lack of equipment and the hassle of borrowing it here and there. We have the trained staff, we have the desire and now we have the equipment.

This last fiscal year we found the funding for that equipment. So that obstacle is gone. We have brand spanking new tents, backpacks and dry packs, mess kits and stoves to go along with our other outdoor gear. And we intend to use them not only with the youth of our county but also with the adults and their families and friends.

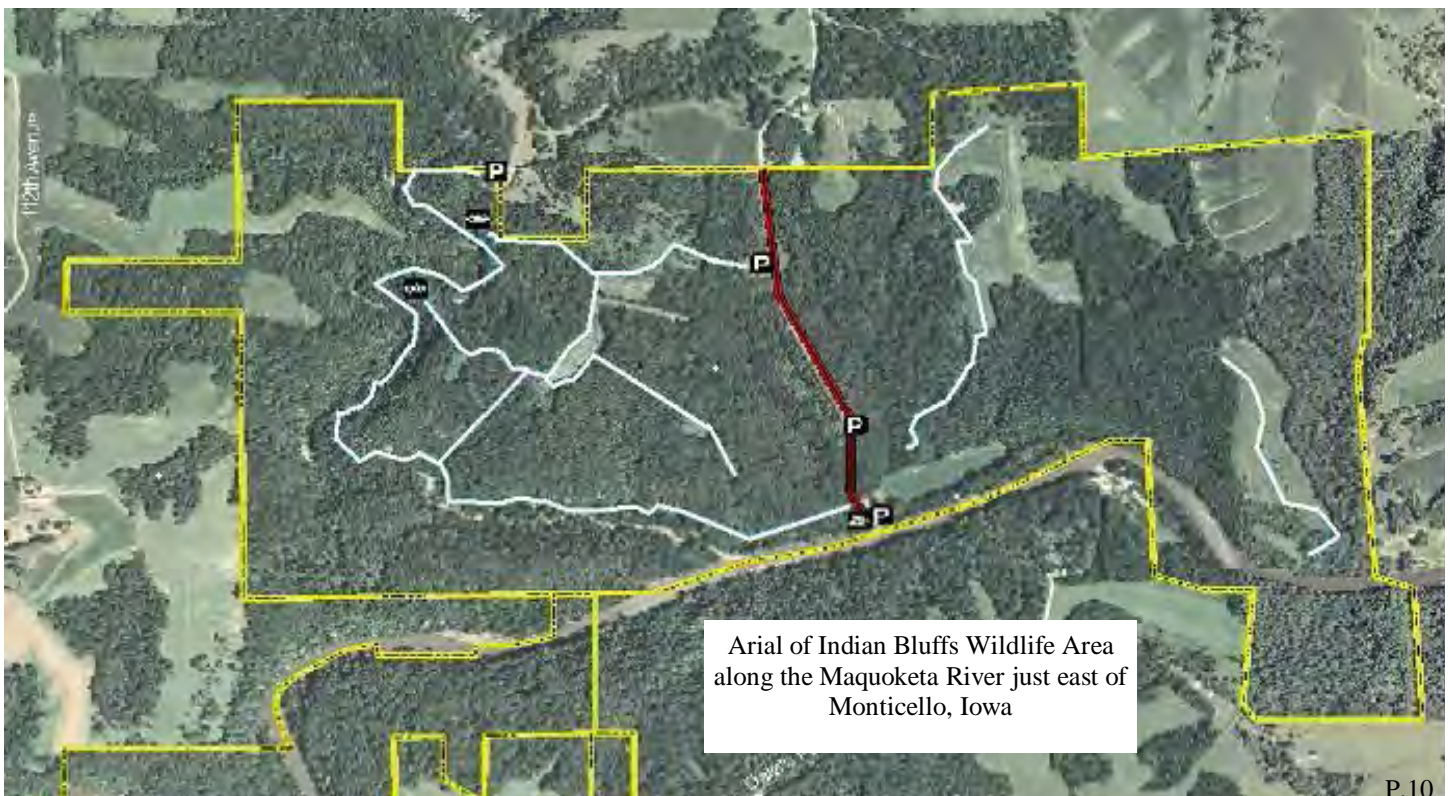
If you check out this summer's calendar of events you will find that we are offering a middle school outing in the first days of

August. We have determined that we will be exploring the nearby Indian Bluffs Wildlife Area with them. This is a nearly trackless local wilderness area that allows "leave no trace" camping. I learned of the area through local scouting groups and we're eager to try it out for ourselves. But before we lead a group of youth into this we will be asking them to bring a parent or guardian along with them to the DeWitt Community Center on the 28th of July for an orientation and selection night. We will be taking only 8 youth out this trip due to having only 2 adult leaders. In years to come we hope to train volunteers who would join us making it possible to bring more youth out. The other option is forming additional outings. But were keeping things simple for now. So if you are interested in leading or want your youth to have this sort of experience then please join us on July 28th from 6 PM till 9 PM for our orientation night.

For the rest of you, we have planned a slightly different outing in October on the Wapsipinicon River. We will be spending 2 nights out and with our new equipment we can offer tents, cookware, and dry-packs for your gear. This program falls late in the year and could be rather cool weather so keeping your clothing and sleeping gear dry is essential. Check the calendar of events for more information and join us if you can.

We believe that we all need to be more concerned and protective of our natural resources so getting people out into them is imperative.

'In the end, we will protect only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.' Baba Dioum



Aerial of Indian Bluffs Wildlife Area
along the Maquoketa River just east of
Monticello, Iowa

Our New Natural Resource Technician

by Darin Voss, Natural Resource Technician

Many of you may already be aware that the Clinton County Conservation Board has recently had the opportunity to create a Natural Resource Technician position. For others, this may be the first you have heard of the new position. I would like to take this time to inform you about the change that is taking place within the Clinton County Conservation Board. This is a change that will not only impact the landscape of the public natural areas in the county but will also aid private landowners with their habitat improvement efforts.

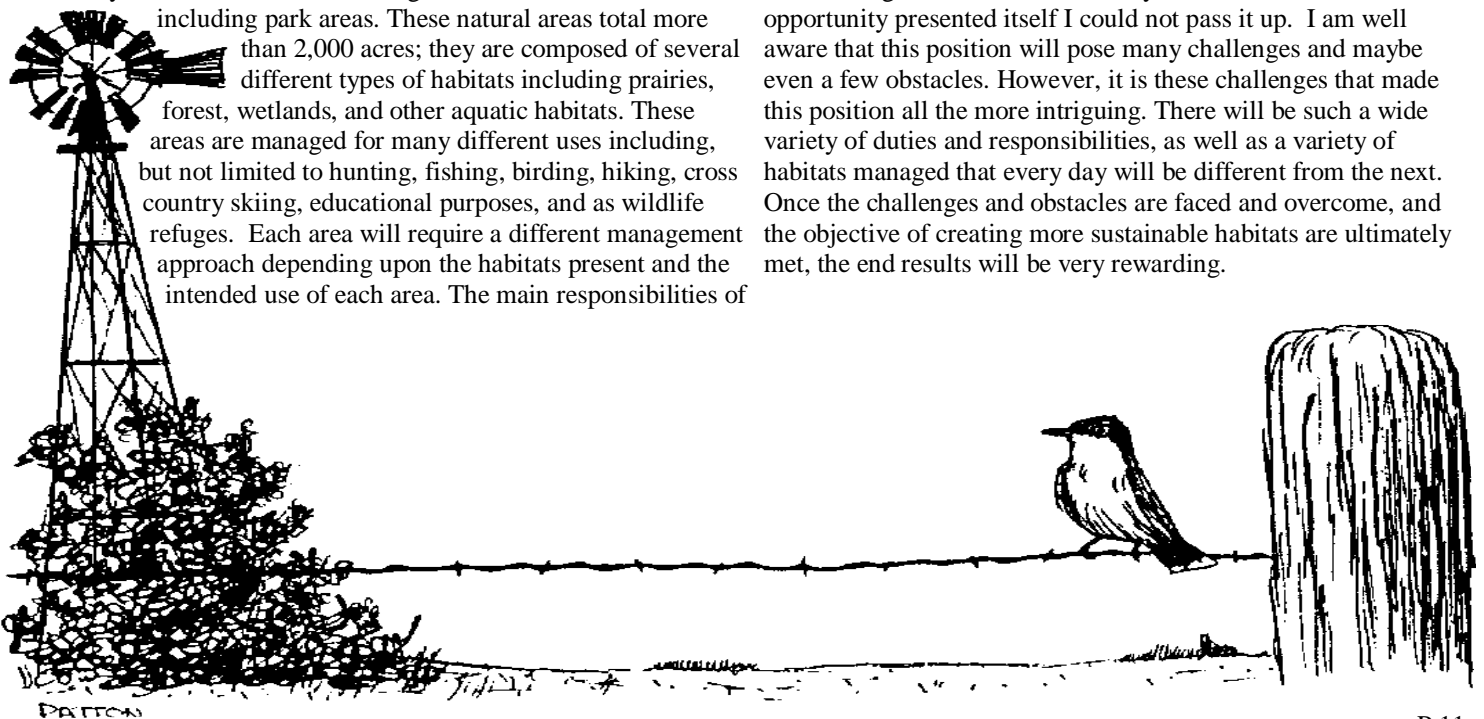
At this time I will introduce myself as the Natural Resource Technician of Clinton County and give an overview of the new position. To some of you I may not be a complete stranger. My name is Darin Voss, a 2003 graduate of Northwest Missouri State University with a Bachelor's degree in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation. I moved to DeWitt five years ago and began working for Clinton County as the Roadside Management Assistant and Deputy Weed Commissioner under Andy Friederichsen, the Roadside Manager and Weed Commissioner. The first two years with Roadside Management we worked under the direction of the Conservation Board. For the past three years we have been a separate department and were located in DeWitt along with Secondary Roads. I have been very fortunate to have worked in the Roadside Management Department for the past five years. I have gained a lot of great experience on managing vegetation as well as many other aspects of managing roadsides. I will be able to apply many of the management techniques that I have learned while under Roadside Management to managing the county's natural areas.

The Natural Resource position was created by the Clinton County Conservation Board to help the growing demands for more extensive management on the county-managed natural areas. The County Conservation Board manages ten natural areas not including park areas. These natural areas total more than 2,000 acres; they are composed of several different types of habitats including prairies, forest, wetlands, and other aquatic habitats. These areas are managed for many different uses including, but not limited to hunting, fishing, birding, hiking, cross country skiing, educational purposes, and as wildlife refuges. Each area will require a different management approach depending upon the habitats present and the intended use of each area. The main responsibilities of

the Natural Resource position on county- managed natural areas will include developing management plans, seeding and management of prairies and food plots, tree and shrub plantings, woodland and wetland management, control of invasive species, coordinating prescribed fires, and harvesting native grass and wildflower seed to name a few.

This position was also created to help aid in managing private lands. A large part of this position will be to assist private landowners of the county with habitat establishment and management. There are many different management topics that landowners can be assisted with, such as seeding and managing prairies, tree and shrub plantings, and woodland and wetland management. Over the past four years I have been involved with the Clinton County Pheasants Forever Chapter. As a committee member and the Habitat Chair, I have had the opportunity to work with a number of private landowners on different habitat projects. I have really enjoyed working with the landowners and I am looking forward to being more involved in the private sector. I will continue to be involved with Pheasants Forever and plan on becoming more involved with other local private conservation organizations. I will be available during normal business hours of 8am to 4pm. I will also be available after hours by cell phone and able to make after-hour visits by appointment.

I am really excited to have the opportunity to work under the Conservation Board once again. My official start date as the Natural Resource Technician will be July, 6th. While under the direction of the Conservation Board, I became fairly familiar with many of the natural areas in the county; this should make for a smooth transition and allow me to hit the ground running. I am really looking forward to making a career change that is more oriented towards the natural resources field. This type of position has been a goal of mine for several years, therefore, when the opportunity presented itself I could not pass it up. I am well aware that this position will pose many challenges and maybe even a few obstacles. However, it is these challenges that made this position all the more intriguing. There will be such a wide variety of duties and responsibilities, as well as a variety of habitats managed that every day will be different from the next. Once the challenges and obstacles are faced and overcome, and the objective of creating more sustainable habitats are ultimately met, the end results will be very rewarding.



Clinton County Conservation

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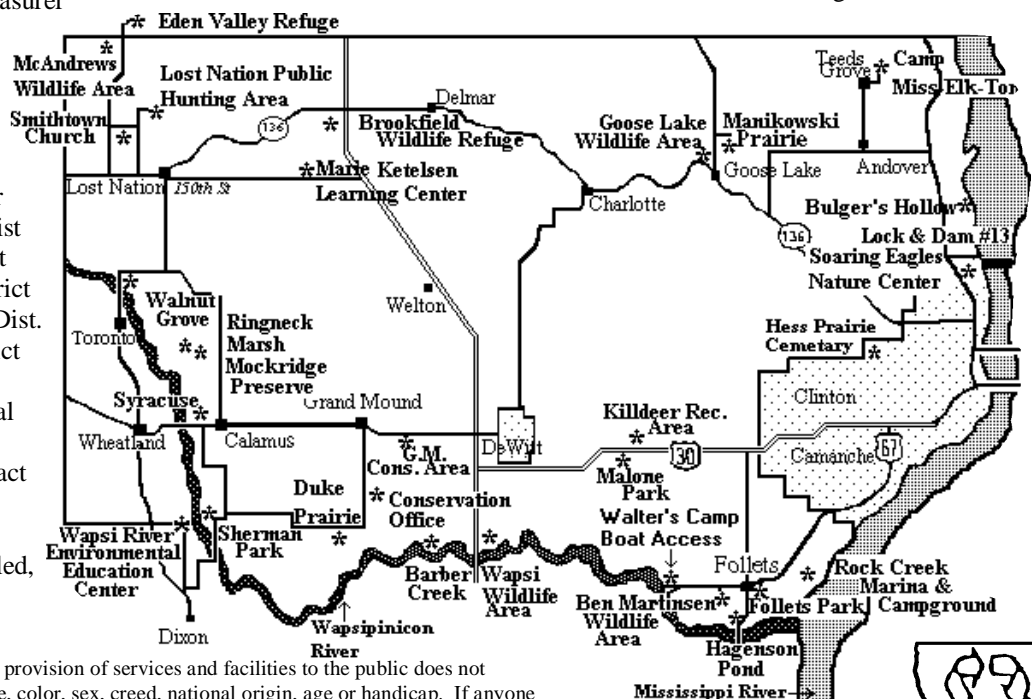
Robert Schaefer, Maintenance, Central

MAILING LIST

If you'd like to get "The Heron" contact the CCCB. It is mailed to County addresses free. Others are charged \$5 annually or is on our website or emailed, free of charge.

BOARD MEETINGS

The Clinton County Conservation Board meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome. The Board meets the second Tuesday the month, 6 PM, in the Conservation Office, located 1 mile south of Grand Mound at 230th Ave. and 255th St. Please note, this date can be changed.



The Clinton County Conservation Board in the provision of services and facilities to the public does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age or handicap. If anyone believes he or she has been subject to such discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Clinton C.C.B. or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Dept. of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

